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Note verbale dated 6 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Ghana to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with reference to the Human Rights Council election scheduled to take place on 9 May 2006 has the honour to convey the decision of the Government of the Republic of Ghana to present its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 6 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Ghana to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and with reference to the first election of the members of the newly established Human Rights Council scheduled to be held on 9 May 2006, has the honour to submit an aide-memoire on Ghana's voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 (see enclosure).

Enclosure

Aide-memoire: Ghana's voluntary pledges and commitments

Respect for human rights has constituted a strong basis of Ghana's foreign policy from the time of independence to the present date, and still remains a high priority. During its membership for three consecutive terms, Ghana effectively participated in the work of the Commission on Human Rights.

The strides we have made in the area of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and good governance have also carved for us the image of a highly democratic African country. Ghana was both the first member of the African Union to subscribe to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the only country so far to have undergone a peer review.

At the national level, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, which remains a fundamental law of the land, reaffirms the fundamental importance of respecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its citizens, consistent with international law. Every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender is entitled to:

- Fundamental human rights and freedoms
- Protection of right to life
- Protection of personal liberty
- Protection from slavery and forced labour
- Equality and freedom from discrimination
- Protection of privacy of home and other property
- Fair trial
- Protection from deprivation of property
- General fundamental freedoms
- Property rights of spouses
- Administrative justice
- Economic rights
- Educational rights
- Cultural rights and practices
- Women's rights
- Children's rights
- Rights of disabled persons
- Rights of the sick.

In order to further prevent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Commission for Human Rights and Administration of Justice was established as a redress machinery under our 1992 Constitution. The functions of the Commission include:

- Investigating complaints of violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power and unfair treatment of any person by a public officer in the exercise of his official duty
- Investigating complaints concerning the functioning of the Public Services Commission, the administrative organs of the State, the Armed Forces, the Police Service and the Prison Service
- Investigating complaints concerning practices and actions by persons, private enterprises and other institutions where those complaints allege violations of fundamental rights and freedoms under the Constitution
- Taking appropriate action to call for the remedying, correction and reversal of instances of human rights abuse through such means as are fair, proper and effective
- Educating the public as to human rights and freedoms by such means as publications, lectures and symposia

In contributing to the agenda of human rights at the international level, Ghana is party to the following key international instruments relating to the universal respect for all human rights:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children, child prostitution and child pornography
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Over the last decade Ghana has worked closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to serve as an oasis of peace, security and stability for refugees in the West Africa subregion and has fulfilled its obligations in respect of international humanitarian law. In this connection, Ghana is a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Ghana has contributed to the resolution of West Africa's intra-State conflicts, which have given an image of instability to the entire subregion.

As an eloquent manifestation of our commitment to gender balance and the protection of children, the Government of Ghana has created the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, which is currently headed by a lady of cabinet rank.

In line with its long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, the Government of the Republic of Ghana voluntarily commits itself to the following:

- To participate actively in the work of the new Human Rights Council
- To cooperate with the new Council to establish an effective and efficient universal periodic review mechanism
- To continue to strengthen policies for the advancement of women to eliminate laws that continue to discriminate against women
- To promote the rights of the child
- To continue to contribute actively in the negotiation process for the early adoption of the draft "International Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities"
- To extend standing invitations to United Nations special procedures
- To continue to cooperate fully with United Nations human rights treaty bodies and to promptly submit its periodic reports.

New York, 21 April 2006